

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----091204 131913Z /47

R 131849Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8933

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 04469

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, MILI, UR, US, ET, SO
SUBJECT: KORNIYENKO ON HORN OF AFRICA

1. ON MARCH 13 I PAID MY FIRST CALL ON KORNIYENKO SINCE MY RE-TURN ON MARCH 6 AND SINCE HIS JANUARY PROMOTION TO FIRST DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER (EXACTLY EQUAL HE SAYS TO MAL'STEV).
2. TURNING IMMEDIATELY TO THE HORN OF AFRICA, I ASKED WHETHER IN LIGHT OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS -- E.G., THE INFLUENCE WE HAD BROUGHT TO BEAR ON SIAD BARRE AND HIS SUBSEQUENT ANNOUNCED WITHDRAWAL OF SOMALI FORCES FROM THE OGADEN -- WE COULD COUNT ON THE SOVIETS TO REDUCE THEIR MILITARY PRESENCE IN ETHIOPIA AND PERSUADE THE CUBANS TO PULL THEIR MILITARY FORCES OUT. WHAT COULD I REPORT TO THE PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY VANCE OF SOVIET INTENTIONS?
3. KORNIYENKO'S RESPONSE WAS TOUGH, BRUSQUE AND PREDICTABLE:
-- WHEN, DESPITE VIGOROUS SOVIET EFFORTS TO PREVENT THIS, SOMALIA MOUNTED ITS AGGRESSION AND INVADED ETHIOPIA, THE SOVIETS HEARD ABSOLUTELY NOTHING FROM THE U.S. TO CEASE AND VACATE THIS AGGRESSION. TO THE CONTRARY, THE SOVIETS

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HEARD REPORTS, SOME FROM SIAD BARRE HIMSELF, THAT U.S. EMISSARIES HAD LED HIM TO BELIEVE HE COULD MOUNT THIS INVASION WITH IMPUNITY.
-- PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY CONDEMNING SOMALIA'S AGGRESSION, THE USSR HAD SUFFERED A SHARP DECLINE IN ITS RELATIONS WITH MOGADISCIO WHILE THE U.S. REMAINED SILENT.
-- ONLY WHEN IN RESPONSE TO ETHIOPIA'S LEGITIMATE APPEAL

FOR HELP, THE SOVIETS AND CUBANS SENT MATERIAL AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (HERE HE EMPHASIZED THAT NO SOVIETS WERE PARTICIPATING IN COMBAT OPERATIONS) DID THE U.S. GOVERNMENT START RAISING A BIG FUSS ABOUT POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEM. WHEREAS SOMALI AGGRESSION HAD BEEN CONTINUING SINCE LAST YEAR IT WAS ONLY A FEW DAYS AGO THAT THE U.S. BEGAN TO REFER TO IT AS AGGRESSION.

--BLUNTLY SPEAKING, THE U.S. HAD NO RIGHT TO POSE THE QUESTION AS I HAD OR TO COMMENT ON SOVIET AND CUBAN PRESENCE IN ETHIOPIA. THAT WAS AN ETHIOPIAN QUESTION AND ETHIOPIA HAD THE RIGHT TO DECIDE WHAT AID AND WHOSE PRESENCE IT NEEDS. AS FOR CUBAN AID/PRESENCE THAT WAS A QUESTION TO BE RAISED WITH THE ETHIOPIANS AND CUBANS AS INDEPENDENT POWERS, NOT WITH THE SOVIETS.

-- HOW WOULD THE U.S. FEEL IF THE SOVIETS ASKED WHAT THOUSANDS OF U.S. MILITARY SPECIALISTS WERE DOING IN IRAN AND INSISTED THAT THEIR NUMBERS BE REDUCED?

3. LABELLING KORNIYENKO'S CHARACTERIZATION OF OUR POSITION UNFAIR AND INACCURATE, AND NOTING, AS I HAD PREVIOUSLY WITH GROMYKO, THAT FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE CONFLICT WE HAD SOUGHT ITS RESOLUTION BY AFRICANS WITHOUT EXTERNAL, ESPECIALLY SUPER POWER, INTERFERENCE, I REPLIED THAT I HADN'T SAID WE HAD THE RIGHT TO INSIST ON THE REDUCTION OF THE SOVIETS AND THE TOTAL WITHDRAWAL OF THE CUBAN MILITARY PRESENCE BUT THAT PRESIDENT CARTER HOPED IT WOULD

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NOW BE POSSIBLE. MY QUESTION FOR HIM WAS WHAT WOULD NOW HAPPEN?

4. KORNIYENKO FLATLY REFUSED TO RESPOND AND THEN ACCUSED US OF LEAKING A DISTORTED PICTURE OF THE SOVIET POSITION TO THE PRESS. FOR INSTANCE, HE SAID, WHEN SECRETARY VANCE RECENTLY ASKED DOBRYNIN ABOUT THE POSSIBILITIES OF REDUCING THE CUBAN PRESENCE AFTER THE SOMALI WITHDRAWAL AND OF STATIONING UN OBSERVERS IN THE CONFLICT AREA "DOBRYNIN ANSWERED AS I HAVE" THAT THESE ARE NOT MATTERS FOR U.S.-SOVIET DISCUSSION BUT RATHER FOR DISCUSSION WITH "THOSE DIRECTLY INVOLVED". HOWEVER, SHORTLY AFTERWARDS THE U.S. PRESS HAD REPORTED THAT IN THIS CONVERSATION THE U.S. SIDE HAD CONDEMNED THE SOVIET POSITION AND THAT MOREOVER THAT THE SOVIET SIDE HAD REACTED POSITIVELY. "SUPPOSE TOMORROW YOUR SIDE SAYS THAT WE GAVE YOU ASSURANCES?"

5. I ASKED WHETHER I UNDERSTOOD CORRECTLY THAT IN THE SOVIET VIEW THE QUESTIONS I HAD PUT WERE UP TO THE OTHER PARTIES DIRECTLY INVOLVED AND THAT THE SOVIETS WERE NOT PREPARED TO DEFUSE THE CURRENT TENSION BY REDUCING THEIR OWN PRESENCE AND HELPING TO BRING ABOUT A COMPLETE WITH-

DRAWAL OF CUBAN FORCES. WHEN KORNIYENKO ASKED "WHY DO YOU PUT THE QUESTION TO US?", I REPLIED THAT I THOUGHT U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS HAD REACHED THE POINT WHERE WE COULD PUT ANY QUESTION TO EACH OTHER.

6. KORNIYENKO THEN ASKED RHETORICALLY WHETHER SOMALIA HAD WITHDRAWN ITS CLAIM TO ETHIOPIAN TERRITORY. NO, IT HAD NOT. HAD SOMALI TROOPS BEEN WITHDRAWN? NO, THEY HAD BEEN EXPELLED BY ETHIOPIAN FORCES LIBERATING THEIR OWN TERRITORY WITH THE HELP OF OTHERS.

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W

-----091229 131914Z /47

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8934

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7. I LEFT KORNIYENKO WITH THIS FINAL THOUGHT ON THE SUBJECT: THE MOOD IN WASHINGTON WAS THAT IF THE SOVIETS DID NOT REDUCE AND THE CUBANS DID NOT WITHDRAW THEIR MILITARY FORCES THE SITUATION COULD BECOME MUCH MORE COMPLICATED AND DIFFICULT. THE PRESIDENT HOPED THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD TAKE APPROPRIATE STEPS.

8. IN REPLY KORNIYENKO QUIPPED "NO ONE IS FORBIDDEN TO HOPE FOR A RESULT WHICH WILL BE ADVANTAGEOUS TO HIM." THE CONVERSATION THEN SHIFTED TO THE MIDDLE EAST AND OTHER SUBJECTS. (SEPTELS).

9. DEPT. REPEAT AS DESIRED. TOON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MEETINGS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, POLITICAL SITUATION, MUTUAL FORCE REDUCTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MOSCOW04469
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780111-0998
Format: TEL
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780376/aaaacmag.tel
Line Count: 164
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 034b74c8-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 31 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3353058
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: KORNIYENKO ON HORN OF AFRICA
TAGS: PBOR, MILI, UR, US, ET, SO, (KORNIYENKO)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/034b74c8-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014